



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
PROJECT MANAGEMENT & DESIGN
TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES
PUEBLO EDUCATION NETWORK**

**Issued by Santa Fe Indian School
1501 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
RFP No: SFIS-PEN-2025-04**

**INQUIRIES AND PROPOSALS SHOULD BE
DIRECTED TO:**

**Michael Manuelito, SFIS Broadband Director
Office: 505-216-7365
Email: mkmanuelito@sfis.k12.nm.us**

**Due August 15th, by 4pm Mountain
Late proposals will be rejected**

1. Introduction

The Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS) is requesting proposals from qualified firms or individuals to provide Project Management and Design Technical Support Services for the Pueblo Education Network (PEN)—a 324-mile middle mile broadband infrastructure project funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The selected proposer will work in close coordination with SFIS, tribal governments, contractors, and federal partners to ensure successful execution of the project.

2. Background

The PEN project is a major broadband infrastructure initiative led by SFIS, which is tribally owned and operated by the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico. The project aims to build a 324-mile middle mile fiber optic network across tribal and rural lands to improve digital equity, educational opportunities, and economic development.

Funded by the NTIA Middle Mile Grant Program, this project must meet strict requirements related to federal compliance, tribal consultation, environmental review, and grant reporting. The scale and complexity of the buildout necessitate comprehensive project oversight and technical expertise in broadband design.

3. Scope of Work

The selected proposer will submit to two (2) roles or serve a dual role:

1. Project Manager
2. Technical Design Support

Project Management Responsibilities

1. Serve as the daily lead for project coordination and execution.
2. Report directly to the **SFIS Broadband Director**.
3. Oversee design, permitting, and construction processes.
4. Coordinate work across engineering, environmental, legal, and construction teams.
5. Track timelines, budgets, milestones, and deliverables.
6. Manage communications with tribal governments, NTIA, BIA, SHPO, and other stakeholders.
7. Assist with regulatory compliance, including NEPA, Section 106, and rights-of-way.
8. Prepare progress reports, risk assessments, and updates for SFIS and NTIA.
9. Lead stakeholder meetings and facilitate interagency collaboration.

Design Technical Support Responsibilities

1. Provide technical review and feedback on design documents and engineering drawings.

2. Coordinate with engineering firms to ensure compliance with NTIA technical standards.
3. Identify design conflicts, constructability concerns, and cost-saving opportunities.
4. Assist in aligning design with construction phasing plans and tribal permitting requirements.
5. Support procurement and bid document preparation related to network components and construction.
6. Ensure technical documents meet industry standards and support long-term network sustainability.

4. Deliverables

- Initial 90-day project work plan and Gantt chart
- Detailed project work plan and milestone schedule.
- Monthly progress reports and budget tracking tools.
- Environmental compliance documentation and permitting logs.
- Construction readiness assessments and phased buildout plans.
- Documentation to support quarterly and annual NTIA reporting.
- Final close-out report with project outcomes and lessons learned.

5. Required Qualifications

- Proven experience managing large-scale broadband infrastructure projects, preferably federally funded.
- Technical knowledge of fiber optic network design and construction.
- Familiarity with NTIA grant compliance, NEPA, and Section 106 requirements.
- Demonstrated experience working with tribal governments or Native organizations.
- Excellent project management, organizational, and communication skills.
- Proficiency with project tracking tools and documentation management.
- Ability to travel to project sites and tribal communities within New Mexico.

Preferred Qualifications:

- PMP certification or equivalent.
- Professional Engineering (PE) License or technical credentials in broadband design.
- Experience working with BIA, SHPO, or tribal consultation processes.
- Knowledge of GIS, fiber routing, and outside plant engineering principles.
- Knowledge of New Mexico's tribal landscape and community dynamics.

6. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following sections:

1. Cover Letter

2. Firm or Individual Background
3. Relevant Experience & Past Projects
4. Key Personnel & Resumes
5. Approach to Project Management & Technical Support
6. Timeline & Availability
7. Fee Proposal (hourly rates or fixed fee structure)
8. Tribal or NTIA-Funded Project References
9. Proof of Insurance or Letter of Commitment

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Experience with broadband and NTIA-funded projects – 30%
2. Tribal engagement and consultation experience – 20%
3. Project approach, methodology, and innovation – 20%
4. Cost effectiveness and budget clarity – 20%
5. Personnel qualifications and availability – 10%

8. Submission Instructions

Please submit your proposal as a single PDF document to:

Broadband Director Michael Manuelito

Email: mkmanuelito@sfis.k12.nm.us

Subject Line: **SFIS PEN Project Management & Design Support Proposal**

Deadline: **August 15th 4pm Mountain**

Incomplete or late proposals may not be reviewed. Interviews may be conducted with shortlisted candidates.

9. Additional Notes

- SFIS reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time.
- This project is funded by the NTIA Middle Mile Grant Program; all federal guidelines, reporting requirements, and procurement policies must be followed.
- Costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal are the sole responsibility of the proposer.

10. Proposed Timeline

During the period from your organization's receipt of this Request for Proposals and until a contract is awarded, your organization shall not contact any employee of SFIS for additional information except in writing directed to Michael Manuelito at mkmanuelito@sfis.k12.nm.us.

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Release RFP to Vendors</u>	<u>July 23, 2025</u>
<u>Vendor Questions (if any) Due</u>	<u>August 1, 2025 by 4pm</u>
<u>Answers to RFP Questions Released</u>	<u>August 6, 2026</u>
<u>Proposal Responses Due from Vendors</u>	<u>August 15, 2025</u>
<u>Finalists selected; invitations to demonstrate with scenarios to guide</u>	<u>September 9th – 18th, 2025</u>
<u>Vendor Selection & Notification of Intent to Award</u>	<u>September 22nd – 24th, 2025</u>
<u>Contract Negotiations</u>	<u>September 25th – October 2nd, 2025</u>
<u>Final Acceptance</u>	<u>October 3rd, 2025</u>

Addendum No. 1 – RFP Questions and Responses

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Project Management & Design Technical Support Services Pueblo Education Network

RFP No: SFIS-PEN-2025-04

Date Issued: July 23, 2025

1. Could you please provide a more detailed construction timeline or expected phasing schedule for the 324-mile fiber buildout? Specifically, are there target completion dates for design, permitting, and construction stages? **The construction RFP is set to come out once this RFP has been awarded. The project end date is August 30, 2026.**
 2. What are the expectations regarding in-person presence for the Project Manager or Technical Design Support role? Are regular site visits, stakeholder meetings, or community consultations anticipated, and if so, how frequently? What is the expected cadence for project update meetings (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly), and will they be virtual, in-person, or hybrid? **At this point we do not require in-person meetings. All work will be done remotely. Expected update meetings will be weekly, monthly, quarterly depending on audience.**
 3. Will the individual selected for this contract be expected to serve in a designated key recipient role, such as Administrative Official (AO), as defined by NTIA's guidelines? Will the selected proposer be responsible for submitting official NTIA quarterly or annual reports, or will this be handled by SFIS with technical support? **No. SFIS will handle all reporting to the awarding agency. The respondent however will help develop content for those reports.**
 4. Will the selected proposer be expected to participate in formal tribal consultations, or will SFIS handle those engagements directly? Will the selected proposer be expected to assist with procurement activities, such as preparing bid documents or participating in vendor evaluations for network construction or equipment? **The respondent will attend the meetings as requested with tribes with SFIS taking the lead. The respondent will serve as the SME for questions and/or support. Yes. The respondent will help SFIS with documents pertaining to construction and equipment.**
 5. Has any preliminary engineering, environmental assessment, or tribal permitting already been completed or initiated for the project? Are there existing technical design standards, fiber routing preferences, or network architecture guidelines (e.g., ring vs. linear topology) that the selected proposer will be expected to follow? Has the project already initiated environmental and cultural reviews under NEPA and Section 106? If not, will the selected proposer be expected to manage those submissions? **Yes. Please see: <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/santa-fe-indian-school-broadband>. I have attached KMZ files for the route of the project. Yes. Section 106 is complete, and FONSI is about to be signed**
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1. Can we work as a partnership team for the Project Manager and Technical Support roles? Are partnerships encouraged? **Yes. Partnerships are encouraged but if respondents have all the in-house resources that would be sufficient as well.**
 1. What is the current status with the 19 Pueblos? Are there specific cultural requirements we should know about? **We have good relationships with all tribes especially within the project path. We will work with THPOs and Tribal offices as needed but through SFIS.**
 2. Will we need to attend Tribal Council meetings? Are there any site access issues we should expect? **No. We are not expecting attending council meetings.**

4. How much of the 324-mile network design is already complete? Do we need a Professional Engineer to stamp designs?

We have the whole project designed but will need this person/firm to help with support once they start moving into construction. PE stamping is not a part of this RFP.

5. What are the NTIA technical requirements? Will there be set timeframes for reviewing designs (like 5-7 days)?

No requirements but to follow the scope of work outlined in the grant.

6. What is the status of environmental reviews (NEPA and Section 106)? What NTIA reporting is required?

<https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/santa-fe-indian-school-broadband>

SFIS will handle all reporting with input from contractors.

7. What budget authority will the Project Manager have? Who is our main contact at SFIS? How often do we report progress?

None. The PM will work with SFIS on all invoices.

Your contact would be the SFIS Broadband Director.

Weekly, Monthly, & Quarterly will be sufficient

8. Will this be a fixed-price or hourly contract? What insurance do we need?

For this type of RFP, we are open to all.

Commercial General Liability, Workers' Compensation, Professional Liability are sufficient.

1. What is the status of the NEPA? a) Do you have an estimated date of acceptance? b) Has the 106 been completed? c) Has the BIA environmental engineer signed off on their portion of the NEPA? d) Have you obtained any categorical exclusions? If so, which ones?

NEPA Process - <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/fast-41-covered-projects/santa-fe-indian-school-broadband>

a. All dates are listed at the link provided

b. Yes. Completed

c. Yes.

d. Yes, Category 1.

2. What are the fiber design specifications? The Construction RFP will cover this

3. What is the anticipated conduit size? The Construction RFP will cover this

4. What is the anticipated fiber size? The Construction RFP will cover this

5. Will this project require drop designs to the CAI (Community Anchor Institutions)/Schools? Middle Mile Anchor Institution Schools

6. Has SFIS engaged BIA/BLM on ROW applications? BIA ROW draft application has been submitted. BLM ROW application is in progress.

7. What is the status of the BIA ROW application? a) Have all waivers been requested? b) Has the AVSO been contacted for land evaluation? What is the status of the land evaluations? c) Have you categorized

As stated above in a draft

a. Yes, a waiver has been requested

b. I will need more information on what you are asking.

c. Yes. Only in one area but that has been identified, and we have already done the work associated with this.

8. Who is responsible for obtaining an archeologist for SHPO sites? That will be in the construction RFP once released.

9. Who will be the THPO point of contact for crossing tribal boundaries? Is there a primary contact or will there be one from each tribe? **Again, this will be identified with Construction RFP.**
 10. Do you have a list of current stakeholders on the current project? **That information will be shared with the winning bid. Are there any specific stakeholders in question?**
 11. Are there any planned regen facilities along the route? a) If so, who would be responsible for coordinating easements for these facilities? Yes, there are planned sites. **They should be on the KMZ file for the route of the project.**
 - a. **Construction RFP winner will be working with SFIS.**
 12. Who is responsible for the ROW permitting design? **Construction RFP winner will be responsible**
 13. Are there THPO permitting fees? If so, how many?
 - a) Have the anticipated cultural finding document(s) been approved by all tribes? **The Construction RFP will be responsible**
 - a. **Construction RFP winner will be responsible**
 14. Who will provide the construction inspection for construction? **Construction RFP winner will be responsible**
 15. Do you have an engineering company already under contract for the project that is providing design (HLD and LLD) for permitting and construction plans? Whereas this RFP is to oversee their design? **Construction RFP winner will be responsible as this RFP is for technical support when we get to that stage.**
 16. Will the Awardee be required to provide guidance in selecting the construction firm? **Yes. Guidance to Construction RFP**
 17. Who will be responsible for approving vendor invoicing? SFIS will be responsible for vendor invoices unless contracted as subcontractor to the winner bidder.
 18. Who is responsible for managing NTIA funds? SFIS will manage all funds with NTIA. **No outside firm will hold any funds or responsibilities.**
 19. What NTIA documentation is required for quarterly and annual reporting? Can you provide examples as to what the Awardee would be responsible for? **As the awarded institution, SFIS will manage reporting to NTIA. Respondent will only provide information pertaining to the scope of this RFP.**
 20. Is there the possibility of expansion off this project?
 - a) If so, what are the future plans? **Yes, but until we get to that point, we will focus on this portion of the project first.**
 21. What are the Cultural days and/or days of respect for the tribes? Those days vary throughout the year and will be identified by SFIS when they happen.
 22. Will community presentations be required? a) If so, how many and how often? b) If community presentations are required, who will coordinate with the stakeholders for those events? SFIS or Awardee? c) Do you have a Tribal Champion or point of contact willing to help with communication?

No presentations will be required. Perhaps attending a board meeting, construction meeting, or meeting discussion with awarding agency but will be subject to SFIS decision.

 - a. **Please see above**
 - b. **No community presentations**
 - c. **SFIS will work with the tribes individually.**
1. Could SFIS clarify the anticipated duration of the engagement for the selected respondent? Is this a multi-year contract or limited to a specific project phase? **The NTIA TBCP 1 Grant runs to July 2026.**

2. Could SFIS clarify if there is a maximum page limit or formatting requirement for the proposal submission (e.g., font size, spacing, appendices)? **There is no page limit or formatting listed in the RFP.**
3. Can SFIS confirm whether the PEN project is funded under the NTIA Middle Mile Grant Program or the NTIA Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program? Additionally, is it possible to share the grant award documentation or application to better understand compliance and timeline obligations? **This is a NTIA TBCP 1 Infrastructure grant.**
4. Where does the project currently stands versus the original plan? On-time, Delayed or Ahead? Also in which phase is the project currently: Permitting phase, Design phase, procurement phase, or deployment phase? **The project is on schedule. We are about complete with the EA process awaiting FONSI. Construction will start soon after with a release of Construction RFP.**
5. Has a high-level network design already been approved? Will SFIS be issuing separate design-build contracts for different project segments, or is a single construction procurement anticipated? **Yes. High level design has been approved, and this RFP is to help assess and provide any technical support. This project is phased but for reasons of permitting and land usage. The updated KMZ files have been attached.**
6. Does the scope of work include performing field audits to verify construction quality and compliance? If so, what is the expected frequency and depth of these audits? **The respondent will work with the SFIS Broadband Director during the construction phase which will include scheduled field audits and QA/QC. Those times will be set once we start that phase.**
7. Are there existing SFIS technical standards, templates, or documentation protocols that the selected respondent must adhere to, or will the respondent be responsible for developing these? **What type of technical standards, templates, or documentation protocols are you inquiring about?**
8. What is the expected frequency of travel to project sites or tribal communities? Will travel expenses be reimbursed separately, and if so, under what guidelines? **A travel budget should be included in your responses. Most of the work will be done remotely unless otherwise noted.**
9. Will the selected respondent be required to provide on-site construction oversight, or is their role limited to coordination, documentation review, and construction readiness assessments? **No. This will work for the SFIS Broadband Director to help with PM and Design specifics noted in this RFP for the project. All oversight will be of SFIS Broadband Director. The coordination, documentation review, and construction readiness will be done collaboratively but with overall final approval by SFIS.**
10. What level of authority will the design support team have in reviewing, approving, or recommending modifications to engineering designs, particularly in cases of constructability or cost-efficiency concerns? **The respondent will provide an assessment of the design and provide/suggest recommendations, modifications, and concerns to SFIS.**
11. Is there a preferred or required project management software platform (e.g., MS Project, Smartsheet, Primavera) that SFIS uses for scheduling, reporting, and documentation? **SFIS Currently is open to any software platforms but internally we use MS Project for projects, MS Teams/Zoom for Meetings, MS SharePoint for documents & report storage, and Google Suite if needed.**

Has/Have design firm(s) already been selected? **No. We have a preliminary design. This RFP will validate that design. We do have KMZ files to share please see attached.**

- a. If so, and assuming you can share that information at this time, who is (are) the selected design firm(s)
- b. If the Design firm(s) is(are) selected, has Design started?

c. If so, how much of the High Level Design (HLD) has been completed.

- What is the expected duration of the Design? – **With most of this already completed with preliminary design, we would like to have this completed within 2 months.**
- What is the expected duration of the overall project? **The overall project goes into July 31, 2026.**
- Is it expected the PM be on-site full time or travel in as needed? **The PM will not be expected to be onsite but work closely with the SFIS team and the construction contractors in the field.**
- Does the Technical Design Support resources need to be on-site? **This person would not be onsite but available to look over the pathway and design of the project. Give suggestions to the design.**
- What is the expect start date for engagement of Project Management and Design Technical Support Services? **The RFP lays out the dates of when they are to start.**
- What is the current expected duration of Project Management services outside of the 90 day work plan? **As stated above this PM will be working the duration of the project to it's completion.**
- Is it acceptable to propose a team where Project Management and Technical Design Support are handled by different individuals? **We are hoping that it will be an individual who can handle both but open to all options and suggestions when responding.**
- Will the selected respondent be responsible for producing any original engineering drawings, or only reviewing and coordinating them? **This person will work with the construction contractors for the design of the path. Final drawings will be responsible to those contractors.**
- Is there a target or not-to-exceed budget for this contract to help guide the fee proposal? **We are accepting your best bids which we will then choose what will fit within our budgets allocated for this service.**
- Will the respondent have direct access to tribal governments and federal agencies, or will SFIS serve as the primary liaison? **The respondent will work with SFIS to work with tribes, federal agencies, state agencies, and private landowners.**
- Please provide more detail of what is requested in the Regulatory Compliance responsibility, and please advise if any Environmental Assessments or Impact Statements have been completed? **Regulatory Compliance is the work done within ROW and easements and those respective jurisdictions. The EA is about complete within the timeframe of this RFP.**

- Has an environmental company been selected, and if so, have any of the environmental studies started?
We are not looking for an environment company. We have already utilized an EA firm which has gotten us to this point in the project. We have completed all EA work with the help of a FAST 41 process.
- Has an engineering firm been retained?
This RFP calls for Technical Support Services which would be engineering work and services.
- Has an accounting/grants compliance firm been retained?
We are not looking for an accounting or grants compliance firm.

Would a prospective offeror and awardee of this RFP be disqualified or otherwise be unable to submit a proposal to an anticipated subsequent RFP/RFQ bid for the tangible equipment and implementation component(s) of the SFIS Pueblo Education Network?

No. Winning this RFP will in no way affect your chances to the construction RFP. In fact, I think it would be more beneficial to the winner of the PM and Design RFP.